OIT Customer Service Newsletter

Office of Information Technology, Executive Office, Office of the Director, NIH

Summer 2005

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"Time is a sort of river of passing events, and strong is its current; no sooner is a thing brought to sight than it is swept by and another takes its place, and this too will be swept away."

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus

A Word from the OIT Director, CIO-OD

July 7 marks an anniversary for me. I started as the Director of OIT in the newly created OD-Executive Office (EO) on July 7, 1996. The past nine years have brought many changes to the OD-EO, IT in the OD & NIH and to the OD organization. I have enjoyed the challenges & opportunities that the OD has presented and I hope that I have at least met your expectations.

We all know that change is dynamic and as much as we desire for things to remain constant, most of the time, they do not. The role of computers and networks in the workplace has changed a lot over the past 20 years. Do any of you remember when the first personal computers were introduced in the OD? Do any of you remember 3COM email, or PCs with no hard disk?

Now, OD and NCMHD users have PCs with 60 GB hard disks, 3.8 GHz processors and instantaneous connectivity around the world. NIH has a wireless network, and many staff use a Blackberry. The Administrative Data Base is a system of the past. What is next?

We know that there will be new: devices, innovations, software/application systems, organizational structures and leadership. Your support team at OIT will continue to learn the new technologies.

One aspect, however, that will not change is our dedication to Make IT Work, Every Time!

David Wiszneauckas

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OIT Personnel Volunteer For A Good Cause

Two of our Desktop Team members, Jennifer Richter and Chip Melsh, volunteered to provide technical support to the NIH 6th Annual Premier Health and Fitness Expo – "Share The Health". This event was held on May 15, 2005 at the Westfield's Shopping Center in Wheaton, Maryland; sponsored and run by the Office of Community and Public Liaison (OCPL).

Prior to the event, the volunteers worked with OCPL to ensure that wireless access was set up properly, and communicated hardware requirements to the other Institutes. On the day of the Expo, Jennifer, Chip, and other volunteers set up access to the Internet for workstations in the different booths. They also helped move equipment, run extension cables, move tables, and do whatever else that was needed.

Once all of the "IT" work was done, Jennifer and Chip enjoyed the fun and games. They isolated their own DNA, watched a "drunken brain" experiment, tried on the Fatal Vision Goggles, and even had a dance with a robot named "Molly".

Chip and Jennifer take a much needed break

Jennifer and Sparky

With interactive exhibits for the kids, a climbing wall, and even a moon bounce, this was a great event for the family. "Share The Health" allowed people of all ages to participate in exciting science activities and surf health-related websites. In fun and interactive ways, they learned, experienced, and discovered new ways to maintain or improve their overall health.

Additional information about "Share The Health" is available at http://sharethehealth.od.nih.gov/index.asp

IT Solutions and Business Process Reengineering in Close Cooperation

While OIT was assisting our customers to meet emerging technical and new enterprise business demands, one problem kept resurfacing: not only did our customers need rapid IT solutions, they also would benefit from making either continuous or rapid business process-related improvements. To help meet our customers' changing needs, we decided to bring in a Business Process Reengineering (BPR) specialist to provide process improvement services.

By working with the OIT BPR specialist, our customers can get the assistance they need to capture, understand, redesign, and implement changes to their strategic plans and goals; key process areas; policies, procedures, organizational, and system structures; work flow processes; key performance measurements; critical success factors; communication (internal and external); and related change management techniques to support a smooth transition to new business rules.

Every new application, web design, or system modification implicitly brings opportunities to evaluate current business processes, identify areas of improvement, and implement reengineering activities and initiatives leading to a more productive, cost effective, easier, and streamlined business processes. Once a customer finds it necessary to improve how they collect or disseminate information, it follows, they also need to change processes associated with the old way of doing business. Using a BPR subject matter expert to help customers identify and implement new process methods, set reengineering priorities, and provide a tremendous benefit.

Desktop News

Time to Upgrade your System/Equipment?

Visit the following links to 1) assist you in requesting information about upgrading your system/equipment, and/or 2) check to make sure you are ordering equipment that meets the current OD Architectural Standards--

Cntrl + Click to Link/Visit these OIT websites at:

http://www1.od.nih.gov/odeqchecklist/index.asp - "OD Equipment Recommendation Checklist." Complete the checklist, starting with "Requestor's Name." Click on the "submit" button in the lower left corner and an email will be sent to the OIT Desktop Team. The Desktop Team will evaluate your requirements and provide you with a recommendation.

http://oit.od.nih.gov/pubs/ODArchitectureStandards.pdf - "OD Architectural Standards"

Standards approved by the ITF and ITMC. [NOTE: When purchasing "new" workstations you should purchase the recommended standards "not" the minimum.]

Again, by using the process, you will be ensured that the system/equipment you procure will be compatible with the existing OD network computer environment.

The Web Teams New Tool

One of the latest tools added to the web team's tool box is a document-generating product from a company called **Aspose**. What this component does is create documents on the fly.

For example, if you have a report that you want to export to Excel, using the **Aspose** component along with some asp.net code, we can easily generate that report for you. If you have some database information you want printed in a Word document, with a little sprinkle of code the web team can build it for you. What if your group needs data printed in a formatted PDF document? The web team can now create that for you. All it takes is an email to nihhelpdesk@mail.nih.gov request to the WEB Team, and we will set up any report, information, or data that meets your requirement.

Everyday the Web Team is finding new ways to help of our customer base with their application needs. Aspose is just one of the many new tools the web team will use in the coming months to continue its leading edge work in government technology.

CRM News

Help the NIH Help Desk Help You!

The NIH Help Desk is there to answer your calls for IT support requests and they make every effort to resolve your issue over the phone if possible or by creating a Remedy Service Request (Ticket) and dispatching an OIT technician to your desk.

Please help the NIH Help Desk provide you with a quick problem diagnosis and resolution by having as much information as possible pertaining to your problem when you call; or documented when you email in your request. If there is an error message please supply that information also.

In order to ensure timely service and problem tracking it is very important to ensure all requests for IT service are documented in the actual customer's name that is having the problem. This will reduce the time a technician spends trying to get to the correct location to fix the problem, help ensure that an accurate history of problems for the customer is kept, and the correct customer receives the notifications about their service ticket.

An example of the importance of this information would be if a customer calls in several times due to "blown monitors" or "multiple PC Power issues". This information could show a possible building power problem in that office which should be investigated by building maintenance.

Did You Know? In late July 2005, the Remedy ticketing system will begin using the information from the NIH NED to maintain your **Customer Database Record**. If your NED entry is wrong then so will your Remedy systems information be incorrect. Now is the time to open http://ned.nih.gov, and verify and correct your NED entry. If it is not correct, follow the instructions below.

Users can also change their NIH Directory Service entry either via the web or via email.

To change via the web:

1. Send a blank email to getpass@nih.gov to see your password and alias (unique id). (This step only needs to be done if you do not know your current alias and/or password.)

2. Using a browser capable of making a secure connection, go to the website http://directory.nih.gov, click on "**Change**", and then enter your alias and password. Click on "**Enter**" and your current Directory Service entry will be displayed, which you may then edit. Finally, click on "**Change Item**" to update your Directory entry.

To change via email:

Send a blank email to change@nih.gov. Neither subject or body is needed in the message. Follow the directions included with the form that is returned to you.

Please feel free to email nihhelpdesk@mail.nih.gov the next time you require IT services. We in OIT look forward to serving your IT needs.

NetOps News

Mailbox size limits are increasing!

CIT is working on upgrading NIH CES mailboxes from Exchange v5.5 to Exchange 2003. We have successfully piloted this process, and now, we are upgrading the rest of the OD. The E-mail system will function the same as it always has, but you will notice big improvements in https://owa.nih.gov/exchange/logonS.asp. Additionally, the default mailbox size-limit has been increased from 50 megabytes to 100 megabytes.

Security News

What a Waste of Space

During a recent scan of the OD Home Servers, it was discovered that over **1,099,511,627,776 bytes** of music and video files were stored in users' home directories. That is almost half of our storage capabilities.

OD policy on appropriate home directory use http://oit.od.nih.gov/showpage.aspx?pageid=58 states:

Do not store the following on your home directory:

- Files not appropriate for Government computers (reference **HHS**, **NIH**, & **OD** Appropriate Use Policies)
- Application programs
- Executable files
- Games
- Local computer backups
- Sound/music files that are not NIH business related
- Picture files that are not NIH business related.

The downloading of music and video files is not only in violation of HHS/NIH

policy, **it is also potentially in violation of U.S. Copyright laws**. The massive storage of these files has the following negative impact on our system resources:

- Non-availability of disk space for business needs,
- Slow data retrieval,
- Increased virus activity,
- Slow anti-virus scanning,
- Slow backup process and,
- Resource intensive.

The Network Operations Team will soon start purging directories of files that are in violation of our home directory use policy and require large amount of disk space for storage. Contact the NIH Help Desk if you need assistance in removing these files.

What's New with NIH Remote Access?

CIT
Customer Support

Account Migration FAQ

The NIH Remote Access service suite of Remote Access VPN and PARACHUTE is transitioning to use Active Directory (AD) accounts. Users authorized after June 1 to use VPN and/or PARACHUTE will authenticate using their standard AD username/password combination. Those with existing Remote Access VPN or PARACHUTE accounts will transition to the new system over time. The new system allows selective authorization of users to either PARACHUTE dialup, remote access VPN, or both.

- Why are we making the change?
- What actually happens on June 1?
- When will we transition existing accounts?
- I am a member of a technical support team. Will someone provide me with a template for communicating account transitions to my customers?
- Is the new system similar to the existing Wireless VPN service?
- What benefits will be gained from the transition?
- Will users need to change their VPN profiles or PARACHUTE telephone numbers?
- If the accounts are tied to AD, does that imply that Remote Access can only be disabled by disabling the AD account?
- I am anxious to get started with the transition. How do I begin?

Adding Leading Zeros to a Excel Spreadsheet Value

Click on the *Column* you wish to change.
Click on *Format* from the *Main Menu*.
Click on *Cell* from the *Format Menu.*
Click on *Number* from the *Cell* menu.
Click on *Custom.*

In the box below **Type**: key in the number of zeros equal to the length of the value you wish to change.

Example:

Original Value	Number of Zeros to Enter	New Value
7354643	00000000	07354643
654	00000000	00000654
12345678	00000000	12345678

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How are We Doing?

If our performance falls below	😊	an explanation of the steps being taken to improve will be provided

CRM Support	😊	Desktop Support	😊
Network Support	😊	Web/Application Support	😊

😊	Available when I need it and/or exceeded service level agreement for call resolution
😐	Not available when I need it and/or did not meet service level agreement

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Important Links

NIH IT Help Desk
Call (301) 594 - 3278
http://support.cit.nih.gov

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Important Dates

- July 16 – OIT Maintenance Weekend
- July 18 – OD Information Technology Management Committee Meeting
- July 20 – OD Administrative Officers (OD-AO) Meeting - 31/6C7 1:30 p.m.
- July 23 – Remedy customer database will integrate with the NED system
- Aug 20 – OIT Maintenance Weekend
- Sep 17 – OIT Maintenance Weekend
- Sep 21 – Newsletter – Fall Edition